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159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

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Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[33] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

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159 lived nearby. She it was who had tried to prevent Karma's mother from going out that night, telling her that she ought not to leave her husband at such a time. The two boys, seeing the state their father was in, now started to cry; and when the old woman heard them she ran over to see what had happened. She asked their father what was the matter. He tried to speak, but was unable to make any sound. The old woman now went outside, to a place where there was a small prayer-wall. From here she shouted down to Karma's mother, who was in a house just below. At first she did not hear, and it was only after the old woman had called three or four times that she made any reply. She came hurrying up, wondering what was the matter, and bringing with her the promised liver. She rushed to her husband and threw herself upon him. As soon as she realised that he was dead she burst into tears; and as she cried she walked anxiously about the room clutching at things as she passed to and fro. In the meantime the old woman blew up the fire and piled more wood upon it. The two brothers still did not realise what had happened, and thought their father was asleep.

159 When Karma tried to approach him the old woman pulled
763 him away: "What are you doing?" she said, "your father is here no more." At the same time she tried to console the widow and told her not to cry. Shortly after this Karma's uncle came up to the house; and as soon as he arrived he went to the body and bent its legs. This is always done to a corpse; but at the time Karma wondered what was happening. The three adults now consulted together; and decided to go quietly and call a certain Tashi, a Lama who was helping to perform the marriage ceremony. Tashi came and sat at the feet of the body, which was placed with its head turned away from him. Karma and his brother still did not realise what had happened and started to laugh and play, whereupon the Lama reproved them. Karma remembers Tashi making a queer sort of whining noise while he spoke to the corpse. He did this three times; but neither he nor his brother was frightened and went on playing all the time.

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a